



NRC NEWS

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NRC, EXELON TO DISCUSS APPARENT VIOLATION AT OYSTER CREEK PLANT

Exelon Generation Company, LLC, will have an opportunity on Sept. 27 to discuss with Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff an inspection finding preliminarily classified as “greater than green” and a related apparent violation of NRC requirements at the Oyster Creek nuclear power plant. The finding does not present an immediate safety concern.

The regulatory conference is scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. in the Public Meeting Room at the NRC Region I Office, 475 Allendale Road, King of Prussia, Pa. It will be open to the public for observation, and there will be an opportunity for interested members of the public to ask questions of NRC officials before the meeting adjourns.

The agency uses a color-coded system to assess the significance of inspection findings, with “green” considered an issue of very low safety significance, then progressing to “white,” “yellow” or “red,” as safety significance increases.

The finding to be discussed on Sept. 27 involves workers not following procedures during maintenance on one of two emergency diesel generators at the plant, which is located in Lacey Township, N.J., and operated by AmerGen, an Exelon subsidiary. (Nuclear power plants not only send power out onto the electric grid, they also take some back to meet their own operational and safety needs. If off-site power is interrupted, emergency diesel generators can be used to power key safety systems.)

On May 17, plant operators were performing a routine test on the #1 generator and noted, after the test’s successful completion, that the generator’s cooling fan drive shaft was not properly secured. A review found that recent maintenance on the fan drive shaft had left some holddown bolts loose, raising a question of how long the generator would be able to operate if placed into service. (Other plant equipment was available to provide the necessary margin for safe plant operation.)

At the regulatory conference, Exelon will be able to present additional information concerning the ability of the generator to perform its safety function despite the maintenance error. The company will also be able to discuss the safety significance of this condition.

No decision will be made at the conference. Rather, NRC staff will take information provided under consideration and render a decision in the near future regarding its significance determination and any related enforcement action.

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